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AMERICAN ADVOCATE OF PEACE.

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BENJAMIN F. TRUEBLOOD EDITOR.

THE DREAM OF PEACE.

Is it then only a dream? Shall mankind awake century after century to find its best ideal farther and farther from realization? Shall "the panoply and pomp of war sit heavier on the world" as generation after generation passes by? Shall "the racial antagonisms, the long-cherished hatreds, and the bitter ashes of former quarrels" last forever? Have John Bright and Charles Sumner and Victor Hugo been false interpreters of the destiny of humanity? That is what the *Birmingham Mail*, which we quote on another page, seems to prophesy. We do not believe it. Such a view is not only a false interpretation of the condition of human society to day, but it is also an assertion, scarcely disguised, of the supremacy of evil, that this world belongs to the Devil and not to God, that all high, unselfish effort for the promotion of a great reform is in the end to see itself hopelessly foiled before the rising and on-rushing tide of iniquity.

The *Mail*, like many other papers and many good people, "sees and approves the better," but has no confidence that it will ultimately win. "That John Bright's dream will ultimately be realized" "is a consummation devoutly to be desired." "Economic principles are spreading much more widely" and "the sense of justice is reaching farther into and tearing up the selfishness of individuals," but the *Mail's* "faith trembles." The fact is it has no faith at all. It stands before the gigantic war evil, as it now exists in Europe, and openly approves it. Nations must be ready with armaments sufficient to make their claims and assert them, or go backward.

The great mistake in the *Mail's* position is that it interprets the future of society from the standpoint of evil and not of good. It sees and fully appreciates the monstrous burdens of war preparation and the racial hatreds out of which these preparations spring. But it sees only these. These are its "incontrovertible weight of facts." To it there are no other pages of history than these blood-stained ones. Fixing its eye exclusively on these appalling facts of history, which are of course enough to make any lover of his kind grow crimson with shame, the *Mail*, logically enough from such a point of view, concludes that this bloody stream of iniquity is always to flow on. But it forgets the other side of history. It has no appreciation of the rising tides of good which have swept one evil after another out of existence and are now attacking the very deepest seated iniquities of human society. Does not the *Mail* know that the average of human nature, in civilized countries to-day, is a very different thing from what it was centuries ago, or even during the first half of

the present century? And it is this changed human nature, tamer and more self-controlled and given to more sensible thinking than it once was, that is forming peace societies and workingmen's arbitration leagues, that is lifting up its voice in the pulpit and in the press and in legislative halls against the iniquity of war.

But it is not alone or even chiefly on what has been done that the peace man bases his confidence. The motive of his work is much deeper than that. War is wicked, unreasonable, inhuman, and God has said that it shall disappear. Peace is the supremest of blessings. This is the thought which inspires the peace movement, and causes men to work cheerfully and confidently on, though they may see no immediate fruit of their toils.

But after all, the fruits of the last half century of peace work are very apparent to any one who has eyes to see. The signs of the times are to such a one perfectly clear. No one expects the war system to disappear at once and without a struggle. The costliness and destructiveness of modern wars, to which the *Mail* alludes, are a curious sort of evidence to be adduced to prove that war will last forever.

When an iniquity runs mad, as the war system is now doing, even indifferent people are likely to awaken to the sense of its presence and assist in its overthrow.

The *Mail* does not think that peace will ever come "by means of human agency." Neither do we; that is, by human agency alone. But it will certainly never come without human agency. It may even have to come in opposition to much misdirected, though well-meant, human agency. But there is an "agency" from on high which mingles with and gives strength to rightly directed human effort. This is the agency which has been working through all the Christian centuries transforming human nature and human society, and preparing slowly but surely that time when the nations shall learn war no more. The present generation and half a dozen more, with all their doubting and half-hearted journals, may pass away, but the forces that are creating "the coming peace" will work on, under the blessing and inspiration of the Prince of Peace until

"Grim-visaged war hath smoothed his wrinkled front" and "the arbitrationist's dream" has become the grandest reality.

OPENING OF THE COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION.

Before this number of the *Advocate* reaches our readers President Cleveland will have started the machinery at Jackson Park and the big Columbian Exposition will have been set going. The buildings and grounds are not yet all in order, but the chaotic condition of things will soon disappear and the streams of visitors will see nothing but the completed product of the years of planning and toil.

It is certain that the Exposition will be a great one, the

greatest that the world has ever seen. The event which it commemorates is a great one, and has served to turn the eyes of all the world to Chicago, the wonder-city of the centuries. In architecture no Exposition has had such piles of well-constructed, stately and noble buildings as this one. In these will be seen the material products of the thought and skill of nearly every clime, revealing the intellectual and to some extent the moral greatness of the men and women who have made them.

The Exposition will without doubt have its bad sides. The evil that is in the world always tends to concentrate its energies where the most people are gathered together and the chances of mischief are greatest. But it will have its good sides also, and these will far outweigh the other. It is not the worse but the better elements of our time which have planned and organized this Exposition. They will likewise control it. Chicago will be no worse a city during this summer than it ordinarily is. On the contrary, it will probably be much better. Nine tenths of the people who go to the Fair will be from the average intelligent and respectable citizenship of the nations, and not from "the baser sort."

The occasion will be one of much educative influence, but it will be more than that. It will bring into contact people of different lands, of different languages and manners, and give them greater mutual respect and confidence. This effect will be produced more particularly by the series of one hundred Congresses to be held during the summer, a thing unique in the history of Expositions. It was a noble thought that brought into existence these Congresses. They will bring together many of the greatest, wisest and best of all lands. What they will accomplish for the speedier realization of the brotherhood and solidarity of mankind will be incalculable.

We are disposed then to look hopefully on the Exposition. The lovers of home, of good order and of the divine law have made a brave and measurably successful effort to have the Fair represent the truest and best elements in our civilization. It will not be all that it ought to be from the standpoint of the best Christian ideals, but it is sure to have many good and wholesome fruits.

THE BOYS' BRIGADE COURIER.

The Boys' Brigade now has an organ devoted to its interests, under the title of the *Boys' Brigade Courier*, published at Cincinnati, Ohio. This weekly journal is not yet half a year old, but its origin and rapid development serve to show how strongly the Brigade movement is taking hold of the Churches and Christian Associations of young men, and to what proportions it is likely to grow in the near future.

It is no pleasure to have to criticise a movement whose professed object is to attract the boys to the churches and

to win them to Christ. We deeply sympathize with every innocent and expedient means of attaining this end. The church has been very unwise in its generation in its neglect, often extremely careless and criminal neglect, of the boys at that age when they need the most constant, the most prayerful and at the same time the most patient and sympathetic attention. But, in the name of that very Christianity which this movement seeks to promote and in the name of the salvation and ultimate good of the boys themselves, we cannot throw off the duty of protesting against it as radically inconsistent with the real spirit of Christianity, as well as peculiarly fitted to make the introduction of conscriptive militarism into our country much easier during the coming generation.

A glance at the *Boys' Brigade Courier* shows to what a great extent military ideas and military methods dominate the whole institution. The gun and the sword and the drill are everywhere in the forefront, and will be, in the very nature of the case. Christianity, even as it is comprehended by the promoters of the Brigade, though theoretically the inspiring reason of the movement, is practically quite subordinate. The system of military tactics of the United States Army is adopted *en bloc* and incorporated into the regular training. "Strict obedience and discipline shall be enforced by all officers," the constitution does not say by what means.

A writer in the copy of the *Boys' Brigade Courier* lying on the desk before us says: "I think I may say that boys invariably admire soldiers, looking up to them as a type of manliness. Few cliques of boys do not at some time in their history organize into military squads in their play, and as they grow older they look forward to going to West Point, to joining the militia, or at least to going to a military school." He goes on to say: "We do not aim to make soldiers of the boys purely and simply, but to use the interest developed by the manly exercises and discipline of military drill for a high purpose, etc."

Nothing could be truer than the statement about boys admiring soldiers and so on. But will the Brigade decrease this natural admiration, as it ought to do, if the boys are to be made Christians through its use? It is not necessary to "aim to make soldiers of the boys;" that will take care of itself just as naturally as water flows down hill. But it will take years for this result to appear, and herein lies the great danger of the whole thing. Napoleon admired soldiers and played soldier when a small boy and was encouraged by his mother to do so, and he became one of the greatest criminals of history. The soldier type of manliness, when you get back of the parade and the fine order, into the realities of the camp and of the field is not the one which Christian teachers ought to encourage or even excuse.

One can not read much of what is said about the Boys' Brigade without a painful sense of the imperfect and even radically wrong conception of the religion of Jesus which